



LuciaWu@aol.com
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To Cynthia_Lie@fd.org
cc jonchan@cal.berkeley.edu, jennkchang@gmail.com
bcc
Subject Re: for Dominic Chang

Dear United States Probation Officer Waseem Iqbal,

My name is Lucia Wu. I am the first wife of Dominic Chang. His lawyer and my son tell me you are investigating him, so I am writing to give you my perspective. Although our marriage ended in divorce, I know very well his good character, honesty and generosity. This is true even though I also know that he committed tax fraud. I knew him best for many years (38years), and I want to share what I know about how he came to be in this situation. I hope that it will help.

When friends introduced me to Dominic, I was 16 and he was 7 or 8 years older. Even though he left school in middle school to help support his family, he seemed like he knew everything. He was the first engineer on a cargo liner, which meant he was an important person. A cargo liner is a very big ship, over 100,000 tons. The captain is the most important person of the ship, then the chief engineer, then the first engineer is the third person in rank. Dominic was also an important person in his family, because this is Chinese custom. He was the oldest son and was born when his father was already older. The father had three wives. The first two wives did not have sons. Dominic's mother was the third wife, so when she had a boy, it was a big deal because this was the first son after a very long time.

This also meant Dominic was responsible for his younger brothers. He was head of the family when he was growing up, because the father was in Thailand. The family does not speak about this thing, so I don't know why the father was away. I only know that the family was not in contact with the father for a long time. Dominic had to work very hard so his brothers could go to school. The family was very well to do in Shanghai before the Communists took over, because his father was a banker there. Then the Communists came to Shanghai. The family had to flee and lost everything. They did not mean to stay in Hong Kong for very long time, but they ran out of money and then they could not return to China.

I was impressed right away with what a good and kind person Dominic was with everyone, and how respectful he was to his mother. This is supposed to be the sign of a good husband. The family let the father come back after I was with Dominic, so I saw he was very respectful to his father, too. I went to study in Japan and then in Vancouver, when he was at sea. He picked contracts that would bring him close enough to visit me. Then we got married when I was 20. Engineer makes a good income, but it is not suitable for raising a family to have a father away at sea so long. I lived with Dominic on the ship for two whole contracts, because his position allow him to bring a wife on the ship. Each contract is at least a year. It was very boring living there. And who wants to raise kids on a cargo liner? So we decided to move to the U.S. to have a better life.

Soon after we came to U.S., our marriage started to be shaky. Dominic never really adjusted to this life or the humiliating things that sometimes happened. For a long time, he was just a mechanic's helper at a gas station. This is very low class compared to being engineer of a big ship. Lots of times, he said he wanted to go back. He thought it would be better back in Hong Kong. I knew that engineers spend too much time away from home, so I refused.

In 1982, we had an opportunity to acquire an abandon gas station and auto repair shop. This was better, but also very hard. There was a lot of pressure from everywhere, Chevron, the customers and the vendors. His English was bad, and his education in Hong Kong was not very long, so he failed all the tests that Chevron makes him take to be sure that he could manage the business. I passed them all, so he had to depend on me as a business partner. We could not run a gas station unless one of us passed the tests

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and got the certificate. It was hard for him to accept failing all those tests. And it happened all over again years later when we started a different gas station for Unocal. I passed the tests and he did not. It was especially hard for him to be failing these tests when one of the brothers he had put through school was now a very successful jewelry store owner in Singapore. In Chinese families, this is not the way it is supposed to happen. It is embarrassing to have both your wife and your younger brother do better than you. He knew it was only because of me that the gasoline company let him sell their gas. We started having problems with our marriage. He was very conservative, and I was more open-minded and made an effort to learn about this country.

We were busy of raising our children and establish our business, Dominic did not gamble very much. After we became more settle, I began to see a problem. He started to go to casinos a lot. When he went to a casino, the people who worked there always treated him like a VIP. The last time he was really a VIP anywhere was when he was living in Hong Kong as an engineer. Also, because he is a very generous person, he always gives away big tips, and that made the casino workers pay attention even more. Mr. Chang, it is so nice to see you, Mr. Chang, please let me get you a drink. That sort of thing. He likes to be with people, and in the casinos, they made him feel like he was important and had lots of friends, after long hard work and pressure at the gas station.

His gambling became a big issue in our marriage, but we were already growing apart before that. It was so important for him to work on the business that he would skip lunch with me to take care of customers, even though we had an appointment. If a customer needed a replacement car while he was doing repairs, he would give them my car, without even asking me. He would work all the time, until every customer was happy, even the unreasonable ones. At the same time, I had to live with his frustration when pressure from the business got to him. It got worse when we opened the Unocal station and auto repair. He again failed the tests and I passed. I became a real estate agent just to get away from the gas station and all his stress.

I think that was when I saw Joy Luck Club, or maybe I read the book. It helped me see I am in charge of my own destiny. I learnt that I have an option. I do not have to suffer in my marriage like the women a century ago. I live my own life. I knew that divorce is something shameful for him. I stayed with him for years after that to be patient. I met another man (who later became my second husband from 2006 to 2007), but I stayed with Dominic for many years because he thought we could fix our marriage. He knew about the other man, and we lived in different parts of the house, but he never really believed I would divorce him, because we had our children to think about. Then I could not be patient any more. I divorced him after 22 years of marriage. He was very upset and hurt, but we settled everything without lawyers.

I think his gambling was even worse after the divorce, because I know he lost houses he bought when we were married. He does not know how to handle his feelings. He does not know how to be alone, he has to be around people all the time, so I think he went to the casinos more and more. He lost a lot of money, relations, but he also paid all the college tuition and expenses for both our children. Jonathan started college in 1999. Jennifer started college in 2001. I let him pay for this because it was important to him to do that. He did his best to be a good father. He always try to be a nice person, to treat other the best way, his way, not the appropriate way. not the American way. He did not realize that there is a cultural difference there. He live the Chinese way in an American society. That is what fails him in every aspect in his life.

In our community, many people believe that everyone hides money from the government and so they say it must be okay. Many people are also very suspicious of government, more than American people. His family lost everything because of the Chinese Communists, when they left Shanghai. It is different here, but he was not very good at opening up his mind.

Because Dominic is a very good person, he would never do something that he thought would hurt someone or if he thought it really was wrong. It was wrong for him to cheat on his taxes. I know he knows that better now. It is important to see his crime is serious, but I think it is also important to see how he deals with real people in order to judge him. He would fix people's cars for free if it looked like they couldn't afford to pay, even if he didn't know them. They didn't even have to ask! This happened a lot, even if he

knew they had a job. I remember once a pastor came to have his car fixed and Dominic didn't charge him anything. "You're not even a Christian!" I said to Dominic. He said pastors do not make a lot of money. He never attend his Sunday service nor attempt to. He is just good in nature and try to provide anything for anyone.

His lawyer says you will tell the judge how much punishment is correct. I hope that the law lets you consider all these things. His name is also in the newspaper. He is well known in the community for cheating taxes. His mother 84 years old, depending on her first SON, and his children and his ex-wife and his in-laws and his customers know all about his crime. He also has been afraid for a long time what will happen with all this. This is also punishment, especially for someone like Dominic.

In Chinese culture, Saving Face is equally important as saving life. To a Chinese man, losing face is worse than losing life. Dominic is going thru his death sentence.

If there is other information that will help you, I am happy to talk with you. I will be out of town between April 22nd til May 6th.

Sincerely,

Lucia Wu

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